

# THE CONSORT

Number Four

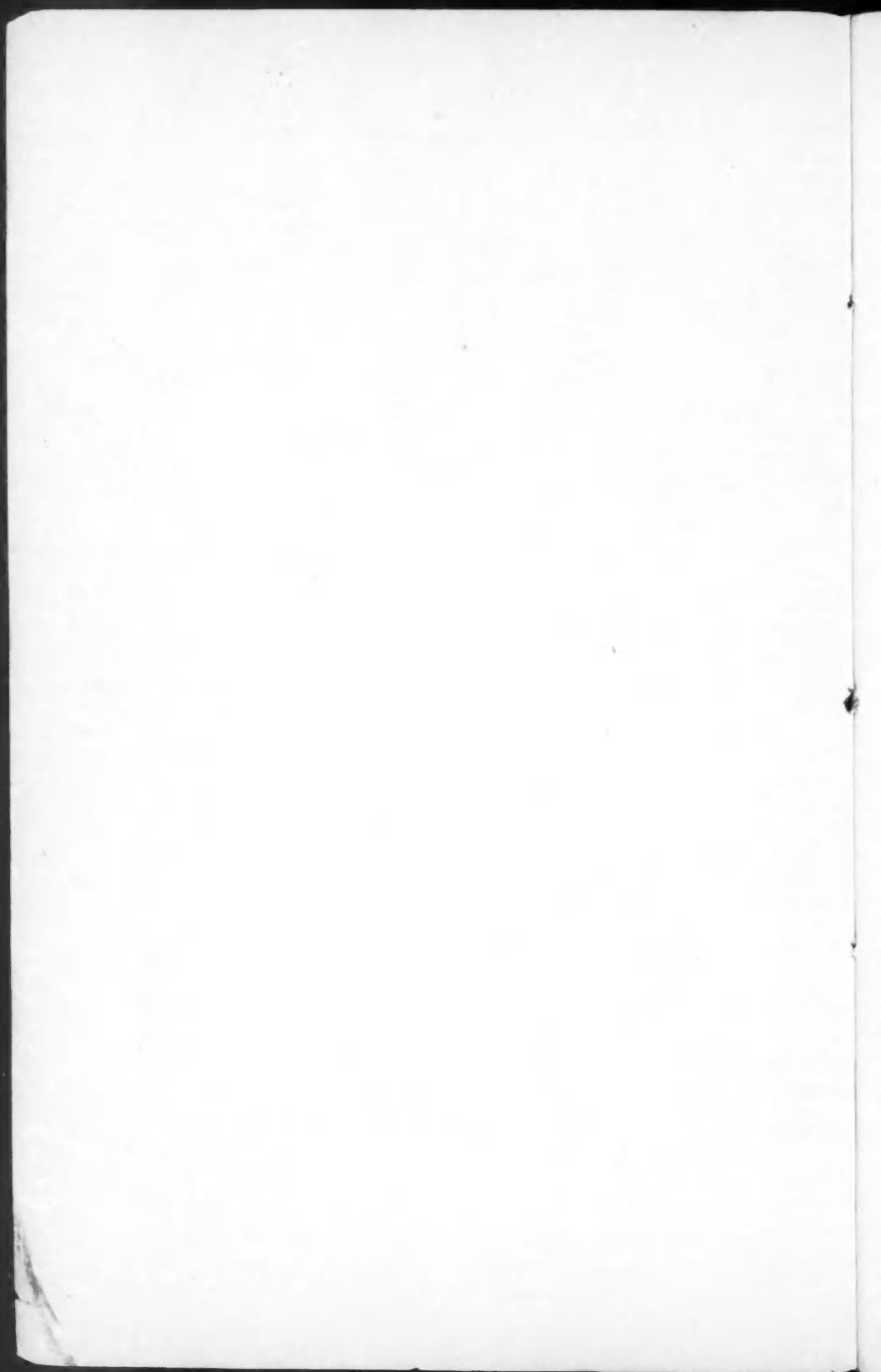
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THE CONSORT

No. 4



REPRINT



## FOREWORD

THE present issue of THE CONSORT has been delayed for a considerable period in the hope of including an important article from Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch. This article was to consist of an analytical description of the early thirteenth-century music of Pérotin le Grand, which formed the subject of one of Mr. Dolmetsch's most recent researches. Its preparation will involve a fairly lengthy piece of work, which Mr. Dolmetsch has been unavoidably compelled to postpone until later in the year. It is hoped that the next issue of THE CONSORT will contain this postponed article, which the Foundation is very conscious of owing its members, by way of a detailed report upon the results of recent work.

It is not far short of half a century since Mr. Dolmetsch's earliest concerts of old music first aroused the friendship and support of men as widely different as Sir George Grove, William Morris, and George Bernard Shaw. The movement for the recovery of the best of the early music and instruments from unmerited oblivion has since grown to wide proportions, and it has affected the musical life of most Western countries by now. In that movement Mr. Dolmetsch has always remained a pioneer. His peculiarly fertile and restless intellect has led him from one eventful research to another with great rapidity and a remarkably certain touch. His work in the last decade, as in earlier years, has ranged over a wide field of practical music-making in areas where knowledge was previously confined to scholarly treatises and learned societies. Perhaps the first great man to approach music earlier than Bach with a completely open mind, it has continually been his function to restore to normal and everyday use music whose secret was not yet within the reach of his contemporaries. In the case of the instrumental music of the earlier centuries, his contribution to our knowledge is still the widest and most important to have been made. Its exact extent is not to be assessed until the ground lit by his brilliant researches has been worked over in great detail by a team of specialised workers devoted to particular areas of the immense field of early music as a whole.

The programme of a concert given by Mr. Dolmetsch in 1892 will be found on page 13 of the present issue. If it is remembered that at this time the general acceptance of the earlier periods of music did not even extend so far back as the works of Henry

Purcell, it will be realised how far in advance of his contemporaries Mr. Dolmetsch had already moved. The most recent product, and the most ancient subject, of Mr. Dolmetsch's workshop was analytically described in the preceding issue of *THE CONSORT*: the bardic music of the Welsh. It may be of interest to members of the Foundation to read an article on page 16 of the present number, from the Secretary of the Early Welsh Music Society, whose object is to record, publish, and follow up the results of Mr. Dolmetsch's work on the music of the bardic harpists. It is by team-work of this nature that the early schools of music now available for current circulation may be expected to pass from the laboratory stage into active use.

On page 2 one of the most talented of the Foundation's own scholars contributes an article on the rise of the movement in favour of early music in Germany. Herr Günther Hellwig studied the making of instruments and the interpretation of early music under Mr. Dolmetsch for a period of four years, and he forms one of the most important links between the vigorous revival in Germany and the accumulated wisdom of Mr. Dolmetsch. His workshop in Lübeck is continually pressed with orders, and his standing in the German musical world is becoming a high one. On page 5 will be found a brief note by M. Paul Collaer, of the well-known Pro Arte group of Brussels, concerning the recent growth into activity of a strong Belgian movement for the accurate performance of early masterpieces. A typical fragment from Mr. Dolmetsch's own pen is included on page 14, and an unpublished poem by Mr. Robert Trevelyan appears on page 7.

An article on page 20 mentions the public appearance of a group of musicians formed some years ago for the purpose of studying intensively certain of the areas in which Mr. Dolmetsch has been the pioneer. On page 18 reference is made to the latest branch of activity to be sponsored by the Foundation in pursuit of its objective: 'The Renaissance of Early Instruments and Their Music.'

The general activities of the Foundation, and of that wide movement in favour of early music of which it is a part, are thus fairly broadly touched upon in the present issue. The details of the expenditure to which the income of the Foundation has been allotted in the past year will be found in the current balance sheet which members will receive simultaneously with the issue of this number. As in previous years, a considerable

proportion of the available income has been directed to a series of grants to Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch in recognition of the fruits of his researches. These grants have, however, been allotted in a somewhat more regular manner than in the past, and in the current year they have amounted to a recurring sum of £25 per quarter, entered in the Balance Sheet under the heading 'Special Fund.' This innovation has been rendered possible by the generosity of certain members of the Foundation and supporters of Mr. Dolmetsch's work, who have wished for the time being to remain anonymous.

ROBERT DONINGTON.



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WILLIAM HENRY HADOW

BY

GERALD HAYES

FOR the second time in its ten years' history, the Dolmetsch Foundation has to mourn the death of its President. It was indeed fortunate that, when it lost Robert Bridges, the Foundation had amongst its supporters a man who embodied in an equally outstanding measure precisely those qualities for which we looked in a President, and one whose name was eminent among musicians yet whose fame rested principally upon his achievements in a wider sphere of cultural humanities. For it is upon its participation in the whole breadth of culture that the particular work of the Dolmetsch Foundation must base the justification for its existence: as Sir Henry Hadow himself wrote of it, 'it has opened the door to a forgotten treasure-house of beauty: it has been a true renaissance, comparable in its measure to that which restored to Western Europe the masterpieces of classical literature.'

Much has been written about Hadow since his death and the present is no occasion for a biographical record: but we can only appreciate his value to us by remembering that he took his musical degree eight years after distinguishing himself in history and classics and that he saw his vast and varied knowledge as a co-ordinated whole, enlightened by that rare power of active sympathy so necessary to transmit that knowledge to others. Music, no less than literature and languages, was to him a part of a deep philosophic conception of beauty. Yet with this he combined the ability of a born administrator: and it was that, as much as his innate courtesy and kindness, that made him so prompt and effective in his replies to letters. He was one of that small body of distinguished men who signed the original appeal for the formation of the Dolmetsch Foundation, and as its President from 1931 he took a live interest in its programme and prospects.

The Dolmetsch Foundation is proud and grateful to have passed through its first ten years under two such honoured names and sympathetic personalities as those of Robert Bridges and William Henry Hadow.

## EARLY MUSIC IN MODERN GERMANY

BY

GÜNTHER HELLWIG

GERMANY saw her great age of music from the days of Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and the romantics Weber, Schubert, Schumann, up to Brahms, Wagner, Bruckner, and Mahler. Not many years ago programmes were almost exclusively filled with these composers. The tendency of music in the last century was wholly in the direction of great and lengthy works made for the concert-hall and the big orchestra; its technique grew more difficult and to play it you had to become a virtuoso. Music-making in the home followed the same path in imitation, but as it could seldom reach the standard of the professionals, it grew shallow and lost its true meaning.

In Germany the reaction towards a real music of the home grew, perhaps, with that wide-spread 'Youth-movement' which sprang up with the turn of the century. The existing musical forms did not consort in spirit with the new ideals. Something less intellectualised and more direct was instinctively wanted; and the first step came with the singing of folk-songs. It was soon found that the finest were the old folk tunes of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These tunes were sung in modern settings. But presently their contemporary settings began to be looked for; publishers found a vast new field of activity, and in the last fifteen years enormous quantities of the earlier music have been reprinted, somewhat indiscriminately, sometimes in very doubtful 'editions,' and very often still under the influence of the romantic German tradition of the last century.

The Bach revival dates from Mendelssohn's performance of the St. Matthew Passion in 1834. Corelli's Violin sonatas and trios have of late been in many violinists' repertoire. But the new movement went much further afield. Beginning almost solely as a *Sing-bewegung*, its interest spread gradually over the many different styles of music from the fifteenth century down to Bach's time. The singing of part-songs gave more and more pleasure; Diabelli and Kullak Sonatines on the pianoforte began to lose their attraction. The new music-making spread among all classes of people, mostly of the younger generation, student groups, workmen's choirs, in schools and in private homes.

Some choirs reached an extraordinary perfection and won far higher esteem than the normal professional choir. The movement had its opponents, and some sharp words appeared in the musical papers ; but the official world could not wholly shut its eyes. Presently a young teacher from Hamburg, Fritz Jöde, was appointed Professor at the Berlin Academy.

The more all this interest deepened, the more it appeared that the path it had taken was not in every way the right one, and that the early music had far more to say than was foreseen in the beginning. At last the idea began to take firm root, that its spirit could have free play only if its performance was made exactly to follow the original intentions of the composer. Many a good publication paved the way ; not only music in reliable reprints, but also musical books and facsimiles, such as Vols. II (facs.) and III (repr.) of Praetorius' *Syntagma Musicum*, the *Locheimer Liederbuch*, Sebastian Virdung's *Musica getutscht*, and Dom Bedos de Celles' *L'Art du Facteur d'Orgues*. The Bärenreiter Verlag of Kassel have been the leading publishers in this excellent work.

It was realised that there could be no renaissance of the early music without the early instruments. Forerunners such as the Viola da Gamba player Döbereiner in München did not find much response : no doubt because their wrong methods of playing failed to convince the audience. But when Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch in Haslemere announced his first Festivals of early chamber music, a vivid interest was taken in Germany, and Haslemere has seen many German visitors in the past twelve years. It was here that Peter Harlan saw the recorders, went home and turned them out in thousands, I dare say in tens of thousands by now. He found a great echo with his instruments ; 'popular' instruments they were soon called. But 'popular' often carries in itself the meaning of 'cheap.' Instrument makers saw a new market and swamped it with masses of cheap recorders, viols and keyboard instruments. People have yet to learn that it is not enough merely to go to a museum, copy the outline of an old viol and reconstruct it. The English instruments were the best esteemed in Elizabethan times, and the Haslemere instruments to-day uphold that great tradition.

At the present time there are very few instrument makers in Germany of really high standard ; but those that there are have plenty of orders. For, in spite of the evils of this mass-production of early instruments, it has at least established them as things of to-day and no longer a subject for historians, cranks and museum

visitors. The gulf between professional and amateur musicians has been bridged moreover, and there are professionals intensely devoted to its performance. But, strange to say, it seems far harder for the professional, with his accustomed traditions of interpretation, to recreate the spirit of the old music, than for the amateur who comes more simply, I would like to say from the human side, to this music. So you can hear many a performance in Germany that is done with good will, and yet must be called a failure.

Three years ago an annual musical Festival was begun at the city of Kassel, arranged by the *Arbeitskreis für Hausmusik*, under the direction of a young German-Swiss, August Wenzinger, 'cellist and Viola da Gambist, a thorough musician in the best sense, and a man of great knowledge. This festival is not pretentious and admits to imperfections and difficulties. But it may be regarded as leading the way in the performance of early music in Germany. It lasts about four days and includes chamber music, church music, an evening of 'social music' (*Gesellige Musik*); lectures, an exhibition of newly made instruments, music, books, and old pictures and engravings; and a number of 'Hausmusikstunden' arranged by instrument makers, to allow their instruments to be heard. The standard of the latter naturally varies greatly and reflects clearly the present position in the making of instruments. The present writer gave last year a performance of Elizabethan music which was thought one of the most convincing of the Festival. Musical courses of a few days or more are arranged by the *Arbeitskreis für Hausmusik* and much appreciated especially by the younger people.

The Festival includes some contemporary compositions. It is a new thing to take pleasure in the music of the past; other generations have esteemed only their own music. It is to me, then, a good sign that those who pursue old music should try to keep contact with present music. Much of it will be meaningless to them; but there are already young composers whose music, while not ignoring later developments, is based on early styles. Only time will show if they are on the right path.

Early music is an essential part of the life of Germany to-day. I dare say it is more deeply rooted than all the marching music for pipes and drums which to the onlooker from abroad seems to prevail in these times.

## EARLY MUSIC IN BELGIUM

BY

PAUL COLLAER

A COUNTRY like Belgium has always been closely connected with the forefront of musical movements. From the middle ages onward, the work of the Southern Low Countries has been famous for its place at the head of creative developments. After Dufay, Binchois, Isaac, Ockeghem, and Obrecht, there came Josquin des Prés, Orlando Lasso, Willaert, Cipriano de Rore, and a whole series of musicians whose greatness falls in no way short of the painters who were their compatriots. At the end of the seventeenth century, Henri Dumont adorns the Belgian school once more, and during the eighteenth, that school can pride itself on such figures as Loeillet, Van Maldere, De Croes, and Gretry. In the course of the nineteenth century the creative spirit greatly declined in Belgium. But the desire for novelty remained lively enough, and the country continued to welcome the newest developments. It was in this way that Brussels, and not Paris, saw the first performances of the principal works of d'Indy, Chausson, Chabrier, and Albeniz; while to-day the most striking and courageous works of Berg, Milhaud, or Markevitch are similarly performed.

The Belgian atmosphere was thus a propitious one for the renaissance of early music, both because of the intellectual curiosity and love of novelty by which it is characterised, and because of the value of its own literature in the realm of early music.

Since 1931, the present writer, guided by the work of Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch, and by the new publications of ancient music stimulated by the teaching of the moving spirit of Haslemere, attempted to re-establish certain works of Dufay and of Machaut in the form in which they were originally heard. He had at his disposal a viol, a consort of recorders and a virginals. The effect was so conclusive that he formed the 'Société de Musique Ancienne de Bruxelles.' This body had the use of eight viols, a violone, six recorders, three cornets, two lutes, a chitarrone, and all the necessary keyboard instruments. It was able to produce stage performances of such works as the 'Rappresentatione di Anima et di Corpo' of Cavalieri, and the 'Ballo delle Ingrate' of Monteverdi, in as authentic a

style as possible.\* Its work has also influenced the broadcasts of the Institut National de Radiophonie (I.N.R.), in which a Bach festival has been given based on the most recent discoveries in the interpretation of this music. In the work of this important festival, Terry's book 'Bach's Orchestra' played a valuable part. And while on the subject of important books, we may perhaps be allowed to express the hope that the remainder of Gerald Hayes' invaluable series, 'Musical Instruments and Their Music, 1500-1750,' may in due course be ready for publication.

The function of the 'Société de Musique Ancienne' is to explore the art of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. Its work has been followed by the formation of the group styled 'pro Musica Antiqua' under the direction of M. Charles Van den Borren and M. Safford Cape. This group has specialised on the art of the Middle Ages, and has at its disposal for this purpose four viols, two recorders, a treble lute, and a small harp. Finally, there is a third group in Brussels, the 'Société des Instruments Anciens,' which performs music of the eighteenth century. Thus, by means of co-operation and a division of labour, it has been possible to secure suitable renderings of the early music of many different periods, in one and the same city.

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\* Cf. the article in defence of these productions, by Paul Collaer, in the periodical "Ars Viva" (No. 2. 1936, Brussels).

THE POET AND HIS MUSE

BY

ROBERT C. TREVELYAN

MUSE : What has come over you that thus all day long  
Listless you sit before your books, and neither read  
Nor write one line, but idly brood your time away ?  
You that of old were wont  
To sally forth through fair or foul, striding uphill  
To some leaf-shaded squirrel-haunted paradise,  
Or some derelict quarry, where secure  
From cold winds and intruders you might lie  
Deep-couched on beds of heather amid tall ferns  
Awaiting me, your mind's true mistress and your Muse.

POET : That still you are, dear Goddess.

MUSE : But how comes it then  
That you, who have served me loyally so long,  
Should prove unfaithful now ?

POET : What can I answer ?  
Let one who was wiser than myself speak for me.  
'The years as they pass by are plundering us  
Of all joys one by one.' So to his friend  
Old Horace sighed. 'They have stripped me of mirth, of  
love,  
Banquets and play : they are striving now to wrest  
Poetry from me.' What with a good grace  
He welcomed, should not I too now learn to endure ?

MUSE : Horace ! Ah nobly had *his* discharge been earned.  
By such example you are shamed not justified.  
Your Odes, your Satires, where are they, and all that  
else  
You ought to have done, but poor of spirit have left  
undone ?

POET : Listen, dear mistress ; for I would reason with you.  
Poetry is engendered in the mind and heart  
Of Man. It is within and of this world.

So if Man's heart and mind, or if the world  
Should change, then poetry  
With them must suffer change.

Once long ago,  
When Man was yet in the flower of his age,  
With a soul restless and wildered as a child's,  
Ardent, adventurous, easy of belief,  
Generous and cruel, ignorant and wise by turns,  
His comforter and monitress then wert thou,  
By thine enchantments ruling the dark waves  
Of wrath and discontent, soothing his heart  
And moulding it to strength by beauty's might :  
Thy precepts taught him wisdom ; to great deeds  
By memorable examples thou didst rouse him ;  
From thee he learned all the arts of life, from thee  
How nobly to give praise to gods and men.  
For in those early days, of Man's whole spirit,  
Not, as now, fitfully of some small part only,  
Sovereign without rival wast thou still,  
Sole prophetess of all truth,  
Mother of ecstasy, priestess of illusions  
That to life are so needful and so kind.  
But time passed, and the flower of Hellas faded ;  
And though in many lands and many minds  
Long not without honour thou didst dwell,  
Yet ever little by little has thy power  
Grown less, narrower the boundaries of thy realm,  
Till now . . .

MUSE :

Yes, but too well

I know what you would say : what now am I,  
Once the pride, the delight of all mankind,  
But a luxury outmoded and despised,  
An abandoned mistress, an unwanted drudge,  
Discarded and forgotten ?  
So be it then—Yet had I thought  
Some few were left who, though the world scorned me,  
Though neither wealth nor fame I now could bring them,  
Still for my own sake loved me : and among those  
I deemed *you* one.

POET : Unjust are such reproaches : never for wealth  
Nor for fame have I loved you. And if now

I have turned recreant to your service, think you  
That I am happy in such liberty ?  
Is not the price I pay for it the dull pain  
Of barrenness, the bankruptcy of hope,  
The miseries of remorse and powers unused ?  
But for this dereliction  
Are there not reasons not in myself alone ?  
For where and how to-day can a poet find  
That quietness of thought his spirit needs ?  
Not in our towns, those grandiose growths of littleness,  
Discordant anarchies of sound and form  
Wearying mind and eye, monstrous Babylons  
Of joyless triviality. Nor yet,  
Though to the fields and woods he fly for refuge,  
Will he find safety there. Along highroads  
And country-lanes with its creeping tentacles  
And far-flung spittle of traffic the greedy town pursues  
him.

The venerable lonelineses  
Of sea-shore and of mountain are no more.  
Even the silent sanctuaries of the sky  
By trespassing Man's impiety are profaned.  
And though his fate be friendly,  
Though somewhere he discover the peace he craves,  
And there, the world forgotten, spend his days  
Toiling at noble tasks, yet what will that  
Avail him ? Orpheus, 'thine enchanting son,'  
And Amphion were fabled by their song's  
Gently entreating spells to tame the hearts  
Of ravening beasts, and move the listening stones.  
But were they now reborn, not Orpheus self  
Could charm those hard stones and unfreeze those clods  
That are the hearts and brains of men, or draw them  
From den or sty to give him audience now.

MUSE : Come, lay aside your petulance. It is my turn  
To reason with you. And first,  
When you would taunt this barbarous age, forget not  
The fate of Orpheus, whom while woods and rocks  
Had ears to rapture, that wild rout of women  
Deaf to his voice tore limb from limb. Remember too  
How by his museless brother's wrath and scorn  
Amphion's lyre was silenced. Take heart then :

No fate worse than neglect need *you* endure.  
Say now, are the joys I bring you  
So fragile, they must perish  
Because but few may know their mysteries ?  
To discover and reveal with diligent subtlety  
The infinite charm of language ;  
Weaving them into the texture of new phrases  
To make old and familiar words seem new ;  
To invent forms and imagery, to build  
Rhythms unheard before ; are such delights as these  
In themselves worthless, though with none else shared ?  
Doubtless those times are long since dead when still  
The poet was mankind's acknowledged lawgiver,  
And prophet of all wisdom.  
Once master of music, despot of the theatre,  
Symposiarch of love's feast,  
Dethroned, banished from public audience,  
Unhonoured is he now. In homely pride he writes  
What few will read, nor any hear, save haply  
Within the listening silence of the mind.  
Yet if to his nobler function he prove true,  
What faculties more enviable, what power  
More greatly used than his ?  
For more than ever now the hearts of men  
Have need of that which I alone can give.  
Never yet have they gone astray  
So far from their true good.  
But though enslaved to inhuman mechanisms,  
Prisoned within foul cities, a squalid drudge  
Amidst the wealth by his own toil created,  
Drugged by ignoble pleasures, duped and brutalised  
By passionate dogmas of despair and hatred,  
All grace of body lost,  
All freedom and dignity of mind,  
Yet, shamed by knowledge of what now he is,  
What he might still become, man half divines.  
Under his miseries, slaveries and self-scorn  
There lurks a fire that dies not, a hope unstifled  
That sleeps and dreams and yearns.  
That flame would you not fan to life,  
And rekindle that hope ?

POET : Alas, how gladly—were but the strength mine !

MUSE : It is not strength alone is needed here,  
But courage to be wise.

POET : What then is a poet's wisdom ?

MUSE : That, his own heart must teach him.—Has he not lived,  
And felt, and loved, and suffered ? Has he not known  
Happiness and desire, and contemplated  
The beauty and sadness of all human things ?  
If he would touch the souls of others,  
And talk with their desires,  
Let that knowledge suffice.

‘THE interest shown in the concert of Chamber-Music, by English Composers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which I gave in the studio, at No. 20, Fitzroy Street, W., on the 19th of December last, has encouraged me to adventure upon a series of four other concerts of a like nature. The whole of the pieces, then given, were played upon the instruments for which those compositions were originally written ; that is to say, the Viols and the Harpsichord. To these, in the concerts, which I now propose to give, I shall add the Lute : and the greater number of the compositions will be taken, as on the former occasion, from the works of those musicians, who once lent to the English school its great repute. This school of Music, which first flourished, and was most truly native, under Elizabeth, and which became more learned and Italianate in the Caroline age, yielded, at the death of Purcell, to a less fine and severe taste ; or, at least, to a kind of art in which English writers did not prove comparable to the foreign masters.’

There follows a long and attractive quotation from Thomas Mace.

‘In like expressions, do Christopher Simpson, John Playford, and other writers of that time, regret the decline of this admirable school, and the neglect of its masters. To revive, after an interval of two hundred years, a due interest in the works of these composers, is my great endeavour ; as it is my privilege now, first, in recent times, to transcribe their compositions, and perform them upon the proper instruments.

‘In addition to concerted pieces for the Viols by most of the above-named authors, as well as some others, I look to give several of their songs, with the original accompaniments of the Lute, Viols, or Harpsichord. Nor shall I neglect altogether the works of the foreign masters. . . .’

ARNOLD DOLMETSCH.

1st February, 1892.

## A PROGRAMME OF THE MUSIC

to be played upon the

VIOLS, LUTE, AND HARPSICHORD

at

Fitzroy Square, W.

on

Saturday evening, 19 March, 1892.

1. Fantazie for Six Viols and Harpsichord.  
*Richard Deeringe, 1610.*
2. Fantazie for Three Viols, being the first in a set of twenty-one.  
*John Jenkins, c. 1650.*
3. Song, "Gather Your Rosebuds," accompanied by the Lute.  
The words by Robert Herrick. *William Lawes, c. 1640.*
4. Fantazie for Five Viols. *John Jenkins, c. 1650.*
5. Suite No. 11 in D major, for Four Viols.  
*Matthew Locke, c. 1660.*
6. Song, "The Primrose," accompanied by the Lute.  
The words by Robert Herrick. *Henry Lawes, c. 1650.*
7. Divisions on a Ground, No. V, in D Major, for the Viol  
da Gamba, accompanied by the Harpsichord.  
*Christopher Simpson, c. 1650.*

## INTERVAL

8. Suite for Two Viols and the Lute.  
i. Symphony, ii. Ayre, iii. Jigg, iv. Saraband.  
*William Lawes, c. 1640.*
9. Solo for the Harpsichord, "St. Thomas Wake," from  
"Parthenia."  
i. Prelude, ii. Pavana, iii. Galliard.  
*Dr. John Bull, 1611.*
10. Song, "A Willow Garland," accompanied by the Lute.  
*Henry Lawes, c. 1650.*
11. Sonata, No. 1, in G Major, for Viola da Gamba and Harpsi-  
chord.  
i. Adagio, ii. Allegro ma non tanto, iii. Andante, iv. Allegro  
Moderato. *J. S. Bach, 1753.*
12. Sonata for Viola d'Amore, Viola da Gamba, and Harpsi-  
chord.  
i. Adagio, ii. Allegro Sarabanda, iii. Allegro assai.  
*Jean Marie Leclair, 1750.*

EASTERN LIGHT ON MUSIC

BY

ARNOLD DOLMETSCH

THE continuity and the transformations of the Art of Music can now be followed through the ages, from the early civilisations, thousands of years ago, to the present time.

How such an apparently impossible thing has been accomplished I am going to tell you. As everybody knows, I have worked for half a century to extend backward our knowledge of Music and have brought back to life, from the so-called dark ages of the Art, a mass of unsuspected masterpieces. I have penetrated further and further into the past without coming in sight of a period suggesting the infancy of the art.

In my researches I was like a man exploring a great mountain, enveloped in a mist which, whilst covering the summit, yet allowed a clear view of the traversed parts.

I passed through the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries fairly easily. The sixteenth and fifteenth followed; then a halt. Suddenly I saw the apotheosis of Counterpoint in the four-part compositions of Pérotin about 1200. In these wonderful pieces I had been struck by combinations of sounds which made me feel that Harmony had been known long before that time.

Very soon after, I was drawn to that Welsh Manuscript of Bardic Music of which everyone has now heard. Having deciphered it, I found there the confirmation of my belief in the remote existence of Harmony. There it was indeed, Perpendicular Harmony as complete, perfect, and daring as one could dream of! I remarked that from internal evidence such music could not have been made later than the sixth century, and was probably much earlier. Considering the prevailing ignorance on such subjects, my statements were sure to be received with misgivings and doubts by those whose conception of the History of Music it completely destroyed.

Sure of my ground, I ignored their criticisms. Meanwhile we, that is, my wife the harpist, and myself, penetrated deeper and deeper into the Bardic Music, and at every step found greater marvels in it. It was like a journey through Aladdin's cave. It gave us undescribable emotions.

Then a brilliant ray of light came. The mist of the summit cleared, and we had a panoramic view of our possessions. It

happened some time ago, one Sunday, when Surya Sena came to see us. He is a Senhalese Musician versed in all the branches of Indian Music. Moreover, he has studied Western Music and is in sympathy with both Eastern and Western ideals.

The Bardic Music seemed natural to him. He recognised the scales as being identical with Indian scales, and at once gave us music on these very scales. But the Harmony, the amazing, stupendous Bardic Harmony, was new to him. He knew that according to sound traditions there had existed in India and China a science of Harmony, but nothing of it remains.

We can see the common origin of both Eastern and Western Music in Central Asia, ages ago. But it is *marvellous* that, whilst the Eastern peoples, so faithful to the traditions of their art, should have lost their Harmony, it should have survived in a small corner of Britain!

There it was performed for thousands of years, right up to the seventeenth century, and the music written down then in a notation similar in principle to that used in India now.

This miracle can only be explained by the steadfastness of the Welsh, and their reverence for their Druids and Bards, who so long resisted the influence of their powerful neighbours and conquerors.

All honour, then, to the Welsh who have kept burning the sacred Fire. Their own lamps are being relighted and the Light will spread to all the World!

THE University Press Board, Cardiff, has just issued (price one guinea), with a short introduction by Professor Henry Lewis, a facsimile edition of the famous Penllyn manuscript in the British Museum, which contains music written in the tablature used by harpists from an early time down to the seventeenth century. The Manuscript is thus described in the British Museum Catalogue :—

'Musica neu Beroriaeth, the Music of the Britons, as settled by a congress, or meeting of masters of music, by order of Gryffyth ap Cynan, Prince of Wales, about A.D.1100; transcribed by Robert ap Huw of Bodwigan, Anglesea; temp. Car I., from the original, by William Penllyn, a harper who lived in the reign of Henry VIII. Prefixed to, and at the end of the volume, in the handwriting of Lewis Morris, are various extracts from MSS. on the subject of Welsh music; with a copy of the commission of Queen Elizabeth to the Counsel of Wales, for the admission of competent persons to be minstrels, dat. 23 Oct., 1567, and a drawing of the silver harp at Mostyn, in 1748, bestowed on the chief harper. Small folio. (14,905).'

There have been many unsuccessful attempts to interpret the music recorded in this MS., but Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch claims to have discovered the key, and has given lecture recitals in Wales and in London on his discovery. Accordingly, it was felt by music lovers, especially in Wales, that it was essential to carry the matter a stage further, and place the results of Mr. Dolmetsch's labours at the disposal of the public, and, in July, the Early Welsh Music Society was established under the guidance of a provisional Committee. An appeal was made for 500 subscribers of 10s., who would receive for this small sum, carriage free, transcripts of the tablature prepared by Mr. Dolmetsch and three double-sided gramophone records of a representative selection of this early music, as performed by Mrs. Dolmetsch. The subscription of 10s. is based on the bare cost of production. The work of the officers is honorary and the Society at this stage does not seek to make any profit. It hopes eventually to establish a scholarship or scholarships for the systematic study of this Early Welsh Music, and for instruction in the use of the appropriate instruments and in the interpretation of the ancient tablature. The Welsh public is not familiar, as readers of

this journal are, with Mr. Dolmetsch's skill and pre-eminence in this field of research, and, at the time of writing, only 300 of the requisite 500 members have been enrolled. The Committee, however, intends to continue its efforts, feeling convinced that this exploration into ancient Welsh music is not only essential in itself, but is due to Mr. Dolmetsch as some recognition of his self-imposed labours in this particular field and of the success which he claims to have achieved therein. We understand that some of the recording has now been completed and that the harp records are very satisfactory. It is hoped that readers of THE CONSORT will support the Early Welsh Music movement and secure for themselves these interesting transcripts and records. The development of this recently formed Welsh Society may safely be regarded as an integral feature in the great schemes of research in which Mr. Dolmetsch has been engaged in recent years, and, as such, it should be of special interest to members of the Dolmetsch Foundation and to readers of THE CONSORT in particular. It is difficult to make even the musically-inclined of the general public acquainted with important work of this kind that has been going on quietly at Haslemere and elsewhere, and this branch of the general movement will therefore need the whole-hearted support of all those who have already shown their keen interest and lively appreciation of Mr. Dolmetsch's earlier fields of research.

The subscription of 10s., which includes records and transcripts when ready for issue, should be sent to the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. D. A. Wynn Williams, Glynteg, Llangefni, Anglesey.

[As we go to press, we are informed that the first series of the Welsh Society's records are now complete and on the point of despatch.—ED.]

## SOUND RECORDING AT JESSES

BY

HUGH GOUGH

Most readers of THE CONSORT should by now have received a leaflet inviting subscriptions to a first issue of Dolmetsch records. The aim of this article is to show how these came to be made and what we hope to achieve in the future. A few months ago, when the writer was lunching with Mr. Ward, the topic of sound recording arose and it was soon discovered that both had cherished a hope of recording music at Haslemere; Mr. Ward was already investigating the matter, and the writer had experience in film-recording and the design of electrical amplifiers. So it was decided to work together, and within a month the first experiments were made on a clavichord and a harp. The results were very encouraging, but lack of financial resources troubled us. It was at this stage that the Dolmetsch Foundation decided to make a contribution to the cost of the necessary apparatus; and it was in consequence possible to start work with an outfit of very fine quality.

It is not possible to enter here into all the complex technical details of the methods used, except to say that all the electrical circuits were so designed as to approach theoretical perfection, and the components used were the best available for the purpose. The result is that the amplifier itself introduces no distortion, a common fault in commercially built amplifiers: therefore the quality of our results is only limited by two things, first the microphone, which performs the essential task of converting the sound into electrical vibrations; there are few good microphones on the market at any price, so we were obliged to make one ourselves, which although good is not perfect. However, it is of the same type as that used by the B.B.C. until quite recently, and we hope to replace it soon by the most modern type—which incidentally works on a principle discovered in 1782! Secondly, we are limited by the process of converting the amplified electrical vibrations into mechanical motion and using this to inscribe the required irregular groove on the surface of the record. No man has yet solved this problem completely; we are forced by the nature of the process to make a series of compromises in order to achieve the optimum result.

Readers who have subscribed to the Early Welsh Music Society

will be interested to learn that the harp records had to be made by us on the new plant, as those originally made were unsatisfactory, and the firm employed was unable to complete the order for other reasons.

We are very glad to say that the clavichord seems to record almost better than any other instrument; whereas the previously available records of this instrument played by Mr. Dolmetsch were not in every way satisfactory. It is hoped to make a number of new records of Mr. Dolmetsch's playing. The viol also records well; if we could get enough subscribers we should like to record an album containing some of the finest examples of the Viol Fantasy: this will be an important work, since so little has yet been recorded in this field. Then there is the lute music, and since we have good and authentic players of this instrument at hand, it would be a pity to miss the opportunity of making their work available to a wider public. In fact the scope is unlimited and we shall not hesitate to record anything that should be preserved for posterity. But one thing we shall need and that is support: record-making is a costly business, and unless we are assured of an adequate number of sales we cannot go on making records. If then Foundation members wish to see the Haslemere music preserved in permanent form, they can best help us by ordering copies of our records, since the more orders we receive, the more records we shall be able to make.

If all goes well we should be able to issue at least twelve new records every year, so that before long a worthy example of Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch's work could be given to the future. In centuries to come he could still teach the interpretation of the early music by the best method of all, personal example.

AN ENGLISH ART OF THE  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

BY

ROBERT DONINGTON

THERE are two moments in history at which the English are known to have led the musical world.

During the very early years of the Renaissance the musical art was entering on one of the periodical cycles of development which have marked its course at all times of which we have any evidence. The great days of Léonin and Pérotin le Grand in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Paris had given place to a period of decline, preparatory to new achievement on a somewhat different line of approach. Two fruitful innovations seem to have made their appearance in the Renaissance period; the fugal method of polyphonic construction, and the art, not indeed of harmony, whose history is far more ancient, but of harmonic modulation. Their emergence was very gradual; but the works of the early fifteenth-century schools are usually regarded as containing the essential germs of the new cycle of development.

The debt which these schools owed to that great Englishman Dunstable is acknowledged in a striking manner in the well-known words of Martin le Franc:—

‘Et ont pris de la contenance  
Angloise, et ensuivy Dunstable.’

(*Le Champion des Dames.*)

A similar debt is again implied elsewhere in the same poem:—

‘Tu as bien les Anglois ouy  
Jouer à la Court de Bourgonge,  
N’as pas, certainement ouy  
Fut il jamais telle besonge :  
J’ay veu Binchois avoir vergonge  
Et soy taire emprès leur rebelles  
Et du Fay despite et fronge  
Qu’il n’a mélodie si belle.’

(*Le Champion des Dames.*)

In the wonderful period of vocal polyphony which followed throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, English composers played a full and splendid, though not a leading part. The great names of Tallis, Tye, Byrd, and their fellows are in

no danger of neglect to-day, since the wide revival of which they have been the subject during the past few decades. But with the turn of the sixteenth century Englishmen produced a particular polyphonic art which has no very close parallel on the Continent, and is in certain ways a unique creation. It was that chamber music for the consort of two, three, four, five, or six viols, whose recovery in our own day we owe to the genius of Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch. In this art the English composers were the acknowledged leaders of Europe.

In England, as on the Continent, the early seventeenth century saw the final abandonment of the modal forms of music which had served in one form or another for so many centuries. The modern tonality based on keys, with major and minor modes alone surviving, took the place of the twelve modes of the mediæval system. It was a real musical Rubicon, from the viewpoint of the modern listener. Harmony from the seventeenth century onward has for him a familiar ring not altogether to be found in the earlier centuries. He can enjoy its progressions with the least possible effort of adaptation. The art of music did not necessarily become richer, but it became perhaps more easily approachable for the modern hearer, at the moment when the present forms of tonality finally established their ascendance.

In this respect, the English music of the viols belongs to the modern, not the ancient world. But in some other ways it retains the character and methods of the earlier periods. The element of virtuosity, so clearly foreshadowed in the contemporary Italian experiments of Monteverdi and his associates, is entirely absent from the English consort music. It is still a domestic art. Its construction is polyphonic, in the same sense in which the masses and motets of the preceding century are polyphonic. Its contrapuntal parts require great musical insight, but no prodigious feats of technique, for their proper performance. In all these matters, the music of the viols has carried the forms of an earlier age, half a century forward, into the characteristic atmosphere of the new tradition.

It is this combination of superficially conflicting elements that lends a certain uniqueness to the school. Wholly modern in feeling, but deriving its technical apparatus from the tradition of its immediate past, the chamber music of the viols carried the polyphonic forms of the Renaissance on to one of their highest and most sympathetic peaks. Its golden age lasted from the beginning of the seventeenth century until the fall of the

Commonwealth. With the Restoration of the Stuart court, the England of Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton changed shape with remarkable completeness and rapidity. Partly in reaction from the Puritan administration, and partly in imitation of the French fashions of Charles II, men passed for a generation or two into a mood of brilliant cynicism not normally typical of our race. There was a deep change in cultural fashions, in which the English musical tradition of the classical age was swept into oblivion.

Of the Restoration composers, Purcell, after absorbing the best elements in the fashionable importation of French and Italian styles, came very near to founding a new tradition no less characteristically English than that of her great, and still recent, past. But his death at the early age of thirty-six years left a gap that no contemporary Englishman possessed the genius to fill. His great work did not survive the impact of the German Handel, and a century and a half of English musical mediocrity was destined to intervene before the period of foreign domination came to an end.

The English music of the viols was recovered by Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch at a very early stage in his career, and its beauty and value are becoming known to-day to a widening circle of listeners. Some eight years ago a body of students of Mr. Dolmetsch banded themselves into a group, under the title of the English Consort of Viols, with the ambition of following up his great work on the English instrumental music of the seventeenth century. The activities of this group have now been extended to include the performance, in the light of Mr. Dolmetsch's researches into the early instruments and conventions, of a number of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century schools of chamber-music, including those of Purcell, Couperin, Rameau, Bach, and others. Under the renamed title of *The English Consort*, it has embarked in the past two years on a series of experimental concerts in Liverpool, Cambridge, and elsewhere, whose reception has been encouraging enough to suggest that, with Mr. Dolmetsch's work behind us, the normal audience of to-day is now ready to accept early music on its simple artistic merits, as a means to musical enjoyment of the highest sort, with less thought or prejudice upon the accidents of date and era than has ever previously been the case.

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